

# **Raider 6 FRG Update**

## **27 Sep 06**

Raider Brigade Families and Friends: time for another update...

It's late September as I write this note. I just got back from leave about three days ago. I'm still in the process of getting over jet-lag and receiving updates on what has been going in the area of operation. I'm very happy with how the entire team has done since I've been away. Everyone remains focused on the mission at hand.

First, some feedback on events while back in Texas. My wife and I visited our wounded Soldiers at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio on 11 September. We had a great visit – and had the opportunity to pin on some awards and take the ambulatory Soldiers out to dinner. There is a very tight bond between the Raider Brigade Soldiers at BAMC. I want to personally thank 2LT Sean Thomas (he may be a 1LT right now – I'm not sure) for overseeing all our Soldiers at BAMC. Sean was injured way back on 26 January and is progressing well. As the first Raider Brigade Soldier sent to BAMC, he took it upon himself to organize the internal support group. I'm so proud of these Soldiers. They remain a part of the team even though we're separated by thousands of miles. I'm amazed at the miracle of modern medical care. My lasting impression of most of these Soldiers prior to seeing them on 11 September was their condition in ICU at 10<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad. Though some of them still have a ways to go in their rehabilitation, they all have a lot of life yet to live thanks to the great medical professionals at BAMC. I want to thank Major Caya and SGM Gartland for their oversight and support for these Soldiers, also. In short, it's a great team effort back at BAMC and our wounded Soldiers are doing superb. It was humbling for Liz and me to spend some time with these Soldiers.

Second, I had the opportunity to brief the spouses / families of our Soldiers at Fort Hood one evening. I went over what life is like for us here in Iraq and briefed what we know to date on our redeployment timeline and planned future return to Iraq. As I said before, it takes a special person to be an Army spouse. I was mentioning this today to a couple of Soldiers here in Iraq. The average citizen doesn't understand or appreciate what it is like to see your spouse off to combat for a year. Our families do so with deep concern - but also pride and strength. I stayed after the briefing to answer questions. Army wives pull no punches...and they don't put up with weak answers! But it was my honor to answer every question in hopes that it lessened the stress and filled in the information gaps that naturally exist.

Third, and most importantly, I got to spend some quality time with Liz and my three boys. I couldn't believe how big the boys are – and how long Jay's hair had gotten! (This was rectified prior to my return to Iraq...)

Currently here in Iraq, things are as complex as ever. We've entered Ramadan. There has been a marked increase insurgent activity – but our Soldiers continue to operate with confidence and effectiveness. The brigade has conducted some very successful operations over the last month – and we continue to work with the people in Iraq to make this a better place. The sectarian violence is still a problem – no doubt. A vast majority of the people are tired of it. I think all are hopeful that the Iraqi government will take action in a unified manner to get this problem under control. In the mean time, the Raider Brigade will continue to work hand in hand with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 9<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division, the Iraqi Police, the local government, and the people in our area of operation to make things better. I remain optimistic – but must admit that things are more challenging now than when we arrived nine months ago.

OK – that's about it for now. The weather has broken – the highs are in the upper 90's and low 100's – it feels nice out. One of my concerns right now is keeping the team focused on the here and now and not on getting home. We're working hard to do so – and I'm confident we'll remain disciplined and effective until we transition with the unit replacing us.

Again, thanks for all you are doing for us back on the homefront. We look forward to being home soon.

Colonel Jim Pasquarette  
"Raider 6"